

## Polio

### What is Polio?

Polio is a serious viral infection worldwide. Most people with polio don't have any symptoms and won't know they're infected. But for some people, the polio virus causes temporary or permanent paralysis, which can be life threatening.

### Symptoms of Polio:

- A high temperature (fever) of 38C (100.4F) or above
- A sore throat
- A headache
- Abdominal (tummy) pain
- Aching muscles
- Feeling and being sick

In few cases, the polio virus attacks the nerves in the spine and base of the brain. This can cause paralysis, usually in the legs. A few people with the infection will have some degree of permanent paralysis that require long-term treatment and support.

### These can include:

- Muscle weakness
- Shrinking of the muscles (atrophy)
- Tight joints (contractures)
- Deformities, such as twisted feet or legs

### How do we get infected with polio?

People gets infected with the polio virus if they come into contact with the faeces of someone with the infection, or with the droplets launched into the air when they cough or sneeze.

### Prevention:

There is no cure for polio, it can only be prevented. Polio vaccine, given multiple times, can protect a child for life.

### What is the Oral Polio Vaccine?

OPV consists of a mixture of live attenuated poliovirus strains of each of the three serotypes, selected by their ability to mimic the immune response, but with a significantly reduced incidence of spreading to the central nervous system.

OPV produces antibodies in the blood ('humoral' or serum immunity) to all three types of poliovirus, and in the event of infection, this protects the individual against polio paralysis by preventing the spread of poliovirus to the nervous system.

### Key facts:

- Polio (poliomyelitis) mainly affects children under 5 years of age.
- There is no cure, but polio is preventable with a vaccine.
- Until we end polio forever, every child is at risk.

**Reference:** Micromedex's Care Notes System Online 2.0